

SECRET

4492-681  
19 November 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Science and Technology

SUBJECT : Comments on CIS

REFERENCE : Memo to Office Directors, DDS&T #4168-68,  
dtd 28 October 68, subject, "Contractor  
Plan Deviation and Overdue Reports"

1. This memo is in response to your request to look into OCS involvement in the problem of overdue contract reporting and to comment on the Contract Information System or related contract management problems.

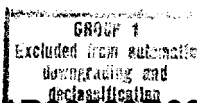
2. On the first subject, I can report that this Office is not represented in the total of 134 overdue reports for the month of September. However, no special laurels are claimed; we normally have fewer than six active contracts.

3. On the second subject, my comments are conditioned by our dual role in the CIS: first, we prepare input data and receive reports as do other Offices participating in the System; second, a member of our staff was involved in the design of ADP procedures and forms for the System.

4. I think the largest bone of contention within the Directorate concerns the intended benefactor from the System. The Project Officers' Manual states:

"Automatic Data Processing of contract information is one procedure which has been initiated so the administrative work of the Project Officer may be reduced while allowing statistical, as well as detailed, data to be compiled and to improve further contract effort without burdening the Project Officer."

SECRET



DDS&T

S E C R E T

- 2 -

In selling this system to Office Directors and Project Officers, the message from the Directorate level has been that the System was built for the Project Officers--strongly implying that they needed the system, whether they realized it or not. I have not found this to be effective sales psychology. The fact that the DD/S&T and/or his Staff might need or want this information has been made to appear a secondary requirement or by-product of the system. There is no need to defend such a requirement, but it obviously is desirable to have the system benefit the individual Office Heads and/or Project Officers as well.

5. Speaking now only of OCS use of the current system: it is hard to argue that we need it when we have [REDACTED] contracts, monitored by Project Officers. Note that:

25X1A

a. There are roughly 10 data items associated with project information and 15 data items associated with contract information. Five input forms and approximately 20 pages of detailed instructions are required to collect this relatively small amount of data.

b. The System in effect adds to our inbox accumulation, producing reports which are surplus to our contract management needs.

c. The OCS Project Officer's exposure to the system (given our volume of active contracts) is so limited that he must review the procedures each time that he is required to participate in the system. In OCS, it has been more practical to make the Budget and Fiscal Officer responsible for follow-up with the Project Officers and for preparation of input data. Even our simplified involvement has introduced errors in the system, particularly due to the input procedures and to the fact that three B&F Officers have been trained in the system as turnover in this position has occurred.

6. Speaking now in broader context, it appears to me that, for a variety of reasons (including the haste in development and the number of cooks in the kitchen), forms design and output also are unnecessarily complex. The forms serve the system but they do

S E C R E T

- 3 -

not appear to provide a useful record for the Project Officer. Comments from the OCS analyst who participated in the design of the system and forms indicate that he has no feel for the Project Officers' reactions to the system. His original charge, in what was at the time a very frustrating environment, was to design forms which would provide the data elements needed for stipulated management reports.

7. The fact that contract reporting is overdue on almost 1/2 of the active contracts seems, in itself, an indication that the system is not accomplishing one of its major objectives.

8. If I really put on a red, white and blue hat what comes out is the following:

a. It is more than desirable that, as the principle advisor to the DCI on R&D matters, you know what the R&D contract picture is, it is mandatory.

b. There is no real doubt that an automated Contract Information System can provide information that is useful to you and that wasn't previously available--but it is also highly probable that a simpler system can give you what you need.

c. To fulfill your advisory role to the DCI you do not need to "own" the CIS; you do need to be able to get information from it. The DD/S responsibility (particularly D/OL's) envelops the entire contract world, not just R&D, and it extends through completion of all legal obligations, not just through product delivery. In other words, you should be able to task D/OL--my intent is to lean all over [REDACTED] to come up with one system, if such is remotely feasible and if we can live through all the politics. If the current DD/S&T CIS can be it, or the major portion of it, we're ahead of the game.

25X1A

d. The fact that the CIS can also serve other purposes (such as meeting certain OPPB reporting requirements) is a highly desirable by-product if the tail does not wag the dog.

S E C R E T

**S E C R E T**

- 4 -

9. Besides our involvement in the overall SIPS world which will include various efforts in management reporting, I recommend consideration of the following actions to improve participation in the CIS:

a. Redesign the forms into a historical record format, providing for all of the current elements of information on one form and shortening the instructions where possible. A copy of this record could then be submitted monthly to the S&T MIO so that data entered since the last submission could be put into the system. This would give the Project Officer a record which is useful to him and simplify the entry and editing of new data.

b. Change the sales pitch for the CIS from, "This is something that the Project Officer needs" to "This information is needed by the DDS&T in order to respond quickly to information requests from higher management." This would help overcome what I feel is largely a psychological objection to the system on the part of Project Officers.

**CHARLES A. BRIGGS**  
Director of Computer Services